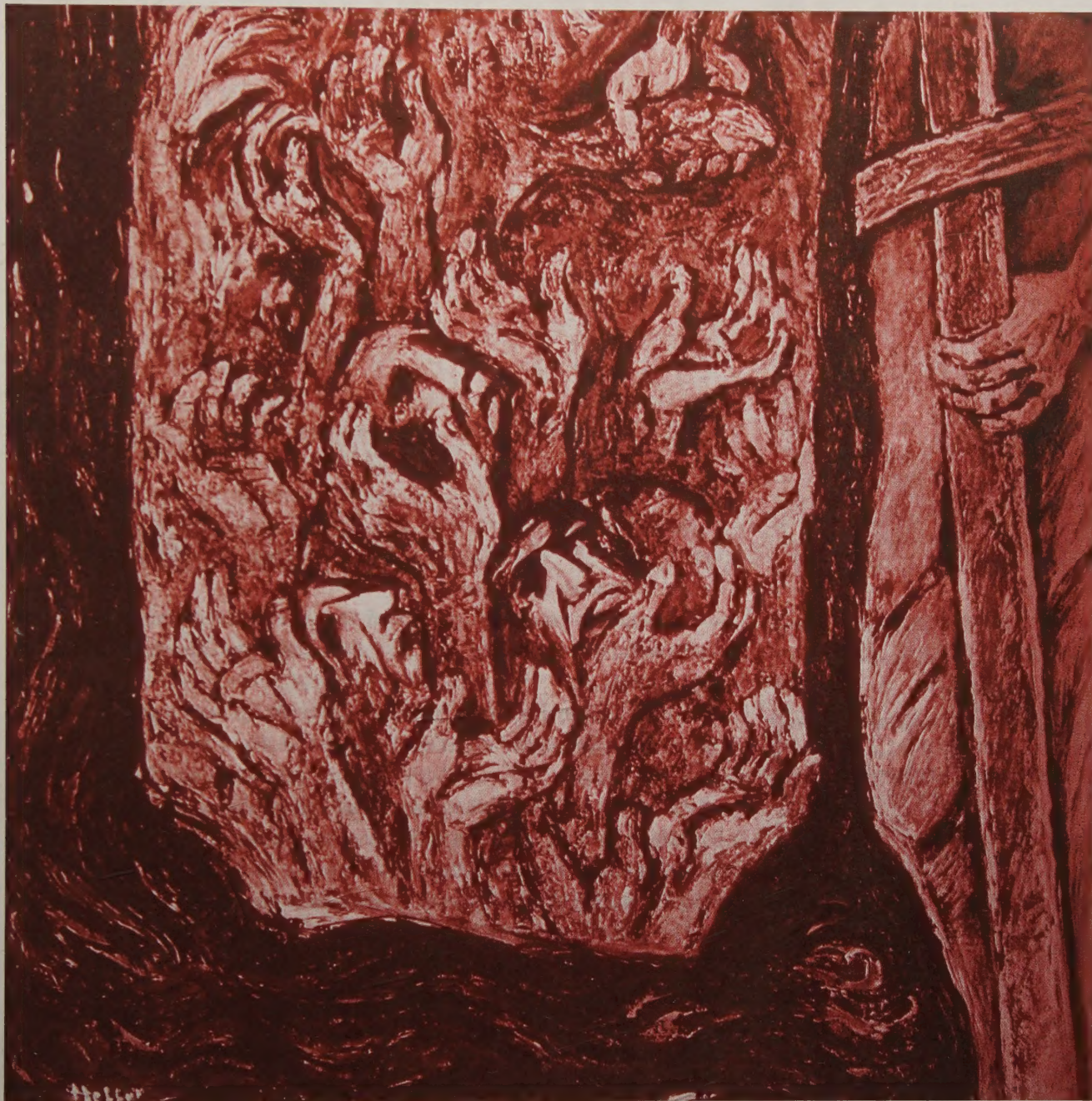


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SEPTEMBER 1999

cca news



Carnage in East Timor

Congress of Asian Theologians II

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East Timor

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One hundred and four official participants, theologians from around the world, attended the Second Congress of Asian Theologians (CATS II) held at the Ecumenical Christian Centre in Bangalore, India, 9–16 August 1999. It was in many ways amazing that so many people came and that many more wanted to come despite all kinds of obstacles and difficulties. Last minute visa and passport problems prevented quite a few from arriving. Only one of the eleven expected participants from Myanmar attended because of tightening restrictions on travel by the Myanmar government. A few from other countries were unable to attend because of visa regulations of the Indian government.

People attended for many reasons and this variety in participation in many ways determined the diverse character of CATS. There were individual theologians who came on their own in pursuit of their individual and professional interests. There were those who came representing their respective institutions, such as theological seminaries, theological organisations and ecumenical bodies. The Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) was there, as were the Association of Theological Education in Southeast Asia (ATESEA), the Program for Theology and Culture in Asia (PTCA), the Program on Theological Education of the World Council of Churches and the South Asia Theological Research Institute (SATHRI). All of the major subregions of Asia were represented. There were participants from Australia, Bangladesh, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka and Thailand, as well as Asians and friends from overseas.

Unfortunately expected participants from mainland China, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia and Taiwan could not appear. Pakistan and New Zealand also were not represented.

A positive note that merits special mention was the strong presence and involvement of Roman Catholic theologians, specifically of the Federation of Asian Bishops Conferences (FABC). Key leaders of the Office of Theological Concerns of the FABC attended and participated fully in the conference.

CATS II in short kept faith with one of its founding principles, namely that participation is open to all theologians in Asia, to Asians who are living and working outside of Asia, and even to non-Asians who have interest in Asia.

The Congress met in Plenary and Issues Discussion Groups around the theme 'Celebrating Life in Asia'. It also broke into disciplinary and inter-disciplinary groups, e.g. Mission and Missiology, Biblical Studies, Women's Perspectives, Pastoral Theology and Emerging Theologies, in which participants discussed issues related to these respective disciplines in terms of new methodologies, areas of teaching, and further areas of study and discussion. It is hoped that these discussions will result in substantive contributions to theology.

We are grateful for the hospitality provided by the Ecumenical Christian Centre and by many other institutions in Bangalore. I am particularly grateful for the work that my colleagues, Lakshmi Daniel and Marina True, invested in order for CATS II to happen.

Feliciano V. Cariño

Congress of Asian Theologians II



The Second Congress of Asian Theologians (CATS) met in Bangalore, India, on 8–16 August 1999 at the Ecumenical Christian Centre (ECC), Whitefield. Our theme was 'Celebrating Life in Asia'. We are grateful for the warm hospitality and friendship that was extended to us by the centre and its staff.

We came from Roman Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox communities and met in a spirit of warm Christian fellowship. Our gathering was supported by the Christian Conference of Asia, the Board of Theological Education (Senate of Serampore Colleges), the Association for Theological Education in South East Asia, the World Council of Churches, the Federation of Asian Catholic Bishops' Conferences and the churches and theological institutions we serve. We came together two years after the founding of the CATS, which met in Suwon, South Korea, 25 May – 1 June 1997.

We celebrate life in Asia, a region blessed with diverse and unique cultural and religious resources.

But Asia is in a time of crisis and change. Our people are suffering in situations of violence and oppression, our nations find themselves subject to the forces of the global

market and international politics, our land is being exploited and taken from us. We experience with our communities and our people the many ways in which poverty, marginalisation, sexual exploitation and religious and ethnic conflicts tear at the very fabric of our societies. Yet even under such conditions, we dare to say that God calls us to celebrate life in Asia. As we work for change and transformation, and reflect theologically on our experiences, we continue to be inspired by the life and message of Jesus, an Asian who announced the gospel message of liberation to the poor.

Our congress opened with a service of worship marked by symbols celebrating life from the traditions of India: the lighting of the lamp, symbolising the divine light, the distribution of flowers, receiving from the open fire the divine light taken into our hearts and the application of sindur on our foreheads. This experience showed us we were one in the spirit with the people of India. The congress as a whole provided us with an occasion to learn more about Indian churches in their social context.

We were 104 Asian theologians from fifteen countries and regions working with the peoples and churches of Asia.

CATS is a fellowship of Asian theologians who came to the Ecumenical Christian Centre to share our hopes and our commitments in doing theology from the perspective of the peoples of Asia. We were especially happy to be at the ECC on the occasion of the celebration of the tenth anniversary of Indian School of Ecumenical Theology (ISET).

In worship services, plenary sessions, small-group discussions and informal fellowship, we addressed the issues we are facing in our churches and societies. We were inspired by the stories and addresses we heard, and discovered the many ways in which we are working together on the same concerns in different contexts. We were especially moved by the example of people in India struggling for change in a variety of contexts.

We looked at three sub-themes: globalisation and the homogenisation of cultures, spirituality in the midst of

the religious and cultural plurality of Asia, and new life in community, communion and solidarity. In each of these areas we identified particular issues and concerns. We also met in eight disciplinary subgroups: missiology, social ethics, Biblical studies, communication, congregational nurture and education, emerging theologies, interfaith dialogue and women's concerns. The congress received reports from each of these groups, identifying new directions for Asian theology.

We were challenged to recommit ourselves to mission through dialogue, to struggle for change in our churches and societies and to develop new tools for interpretation of theology in the variety of Asian contexts. The congress affirmed the need for a new paradigm of mission, emphasising dialogue and mutual conversion in the context of religious and cultural pluralism, and resistance against the forces of oppression, exploitation and violence.

Officers and Members of the Continuation Committee, 1999-2001

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Dr Wong Wai Ching, Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong
Dr Kim Yong Bock, Hanil University and Theological Seminary, Korea

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Dr Feliciano V. Cariño, CCA, Hong Kong and Philippines

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Ms Yong Ting Jin, AWRC, Malaysia



CATS interdisciplinary discussion group on interfaith dialogue



M.J. Joseph



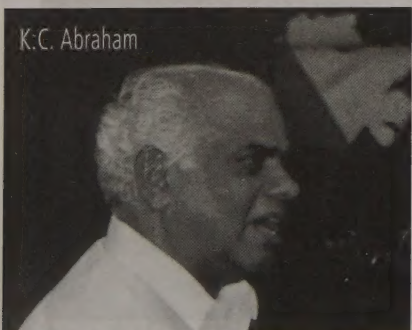
Wong Wai Ching



Choe Hyondok



Feliciano V. Cariño



K.C. Abraham



Informal get-together

We will take this message back to our churches.

We were happy to see many new and younger faces in our midst, and this encourages us greatly as we look to the new millennium. At the same time, we were disappointed that many participants we expected to be here were unable to join us due to the grave situations they are facing in their home countries, and, in some cases, the difficulty in obtaining visas.

We recognise that CATS is in a time of transition. Because of the pressures of time and work that we all experience, some of our expectations from

the first congress remain unfulfilled. Yet because our time together in this community of theologians was so valuable, we recommit ourselves to discovering new ways of networking and relating to one another in the years to come.

We leave Bangalore with thankfulness to God for this time together. And we leave with a renewed commitment to working for change in our societies and churches, drawing on the rich resources from our cultures, our peoples and our religions for the celebration of life in Asia.

15 August 1999

The congress is becoming a forerunner to and a testing ground of a wider and more inclusive ecumenical theological forum that stretches far beyond the boundaries of current ecumenical structures and organisations. The two congresses held so far indicate that with sensitive and careful planning it is possible to bring people together for substantive discussions on issues of critical and common concern. The fact that a very large majority of the participants paid for their own travel or found the means to attend gives further encouragement. Where ecumenical activities touch personal and institutional needs and concerns people will find some way of supporting them and participating in them.

Feliciano V. Cariño

Carnage in East Timor

Once again East Timor has experienced a bloodbath. The anti-independence militias backed by the Indonesian army rampaged the island for a week, slaughtering hundreds of innocent people. All day gunfire rang through the capital Dili, where witnesses reported seeing piles of corpses. The military and their auxiliaries systematically brought the city to anarchy when they fired into the crowd. The people took shelter in different places, 1,500 of them in the UN Assistance Mission in East Timor (UNAMET) compound.

The home of Nobel peace laureate, Roman Catholic Bishop Carlos Belo, was attacked when 8,000 refugees were camped on the compound of the Bishop's house. The militia attacked a church office complex in Dili where at least 2,000 people had sought refuge. They rounded up tens of thousands of residents and trucked them in organised convoys across the border to West Timor or herded them into military trucks and drove them to an unknown fate. Thousands of others hid or went into exile to escape the military backed militia.

Nobody could or would control the militias. With the support of the Indonesian army they shed blood and unleashed destruction in a last desperate attempt to destroy the hopes and aspirations for independence of the majority of the people.

Church Leaders Murdered, Churches Burned

Catholic and Protestant church leaders were attacked. There were horrific massacres in churches where people sought refuge when the militia and the army unleashed terror and wanton killings against the pro-independence people. Among those reported murdered were Fr



Pro-independence supporters before the vote (photo by Joy Balazo)

Francisco Barreto, the local head of the Roman Catholic aid agency Caritas, Fr Karl Albrecht, a 70-year-old Jesuit priest from Germany, six other Roman Catholic priests and ten nuns. Fr Karl Albrecht was shot dead on 11 September after refusing to leave refugees to certain death. Albrecht, who went to Indonesia 30 years ago as a missionary, remained in East Timor after many foreigners pulled out after the independence vote.

One hundred people were reported massacred in a church at Suai, on the South coast of East Timor, 144 people massacred at Dili's Don Bosco school and seventy-five others murdered when militia men attacked the refugee-crammed compound of Bishop Belo. Armed militiamen entered Bishop Belo's compound at daybreak, shot at the building and set it on fire to force people inside to come out. As the people ran out in panic, militiamen shot them with firearms, the UCA



A deserted street in Dili (photo by Joy Balazo)



East Timorese refugees sheltered in a Greek community hall in Darwin, Australia (photo by Mathews George Chunakara)

News reported, quoting eyewitnesses. Bishop Belo was then flown in a police helicopter to Baucau, 120 km east of Dili. Bishop Carlos Belo fled the territory to Darwin, Australia. The evacuation left the bishop's residence empty, and armed militia ransacked the premises and burnt the Bishop's archives and his house. Bishop Basilio Nascimento suffered a knife wound to one hand during a similar attack on his house in Baicau by troops and militias. He fled to the hills with nuns, priests and refugees who had been at his house. Eventually he fled the territory. All reports confirmed that the murderous rampage by roving bands of killers was orchestrated and supported by the Indonesian military, which had the aim of 'ethnic cleansing'. It is widely believed that the militia-orchestrated violence was systematically planned over a long time. Militia members had knowledge of this preparation, and are now obvious targets for the Indonesian military as it tries to eradicate evidence that the violence was not spontaneous.

Background

The agreements signed by the governments of Indonesia and Portugal and by the United Nations Secretary General on 5 May 1999 allowed the people of East Timor to participate in a popular consultation on the future of the territory on 30 August 1999. The United Nations Mission in East Timor (UNAMET) was established on 11 June and proceeded to organise and conduct the popular consultation. The people of East Timor voted overwhelmingly for independence on 30 August in the midst of intimidation and coercion created by Indonesian military backed militias. On September 4, UNAMET announced that 344,580 (78.5%) of the East Timorese had voted in favour of independence compared to 94,388 (21%) who voted for autonomy under Indonesian rule.

The referendum was the result of a surprise announcement in January by President B.J. Habibie that offered the territory a chance to vote for independence. This offer was highly unpopular among the

military, which has been considering East Timor as its 'baby', ever since Indonesia invaded East Timor in 1975. The pro-Indonesian militias that were carrying out the carnage were created by the Indonesian military in an attempt to sabotage the referendum process through violence and intimidation. However, during referendum day and the five days of vote counting, East Timor became an island of peace. But when the referendum result was announced on 4 September, the pro-Jakarta militias began an armed buildup in Dili and started taking reprisals against pro-independence people. The rampage of terror continued for five days.

The Human Tragedy

More than 200,000 people fled the island to refugee camps in West Timor and another 100,000 people were internally displaced. Although the 5 May agreements stressed that the responsibility for ensuring a secure environment devoid of violence or other forms of intimidation would rest with the appropriate Indonesian security authorities and that the absolute neutrality of the Indonesian Armed Forces (TNI) would be essential, all reports confirm that what happened was planned terror and murder of innocent East Timorese.

The Indonesian Government declared a curfew and martial law in East Timor on 7 September saying that doing so would stem the violence unleashed by its own troops and their anti-independence militia proxies. This did not reassure the victims—it was letting the fox guard the chickens. For years, militarisation has been rampant in East Timor and the military has been responsible for numerous human rights violations since 1975, including the killing of 200,000 East Timorese.

There are about 6,000 East Timorese in the Indonesian Army in the territory, including two all-Timorese battalions, serving as noncommissioned officers and soldiers of the regular army. According to military analysts, there are also about 1,000 East Timorese serving



Pro-independence supporters before the vote



Joy Balazo (Uniting Church in Australia), UNAMET observer, with children

in the national police force and based in Timor. Most of these soldiers and police are said to have mutinied and are responsible for much of the turmoil now in the island.

Under increasing international pressure, President Habibie agreed to the dispatch of a UN peacekeeping force to the ravaged East Timor, although Indonesia had refused earlier to accept an international force, saying that the Indonesian army could quell the violence sweeping in the territory. The United Nation's Security Council on 15 September approved the sending of multinational forces to restore peace in the ravaged territory.

Refugees and Internally Displaced

Having fled their homes to escape militia guns and machetes, thousands of East Timorese now faced the threat of starvation in the refugee camps, hills and jungles. The East Timor International Solidarity Centre reported that 250,000 East Timorese were in West Timor and other Indonesian provinces, about 200,000 of them in the West Timor border towns of Kupang and Atambua. 300,000 people were internally displaced and a large number of them were hiding in the hills and jungles of East Timor. The 100,000 people still left in their homes included pro-Indonesia factions.

Meanwhile, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) declared that all East Timorese are internally displaced or refugees elsewhere in Indonesia. The Chief of a Red Cross Jakarta delegation said on 19 September that an estimated 600,000 East Timorese were refugees, while tens of thousands were in the mountains. The ICRC estimated that 200,000 were refugees outside East Timor. It reported on 18 September that some 90,000 displaced persons were living in precarious conditions in Dare, about 10 km south of Dili.

The ICRC sent planes loaded with food to Dili. Aid agencies set up camps in Kupang and Atambua. Churches in West Timor also provided assistance. However, aid workers reported that food supplies to the thousands of refugees could run out. Prices of food and other commodities skyrocketed. Refugee camps were overcrowded and people had little water and sanitation facilities.

News agencies reported that because of starvation in East Timor's sun-scorched hills hundreds of thousands of people chased from their homes by Indonesian troops and militia killers were 'staring death in the face. Many have no food, water or money. Some are foraging for bananas and roots, under constant threat of attack by soldiers and militias.' Whether shot, starving or stricken by disease, East Timorese are entering a second tragic era in the backlash of terror against their vote for independence. The multinational peace force under the leadership of Australia started the deployment of the 20-nation force on Monday, 20 September.

Ecumenical Response

The Christian Conference of Asia and the World Council of Churches have been monitoring the situation in East Timor and have been constantly in touch with GKTT and PGI staff members who were in East Timor before and after the voting. The PGI has deputed two of its staff members, Ms Stein-Jaleel and Mr Audy Wusang, along with Rev. Saut and Ms Imelda to assist the East Timor Church and the international observers' team. Eventually Steen-Jaleel, Rev. Saut and Ms Imelda were evacuated from Dili.

Several representatives of ecumenical partner agencies from Europe and North America participated in the international observers team that visited East Timor during the time of voting and counting. Ms Joy Balazo of the Uniting Church of Australia, who is also a member of the CCA International Affairs Committee, stayed in East Timor during and after the voting process and she was closely monitoring the situation with the assistance of GKTT until 6 September.

Churches and ecumenical partners from different parts of the world condemned the savagery orchestrated in East Timor, demanding action by Indonesian authorities to halt the army-assisted militia's violence. The Executive Board of the Communion of Churches in Indonesia (PGI) issued a strong statement expressing its concern about the violence and brutality that have spread in East Timor.

The PGI called for withdrawal of martial law in East Timor and immediate action by the Indonesian government to stop the violence in East Timor, including accepting the presence of an international peace keeping force in East Timor.

The PGI made it clear of its position that Indonesian people should accept the verdict of the referendum.

The Protestant Evangelical Church in West Timor and other member Churches of PGI are providing humanitarian assistance to refugees in Kupang and Atambu with help from different international ecumenical organisations, including CCA, WCC and their member churches.

PGI staff members, Ms Stein-Jaleel and Mr Audy Wusang, along with Rev. Saut and Ms Imelda are now in Kupang to assist the West Timor Church in liaison with local churches and international ecumenical partners. They are monitoring the refugee situation and providing assistance to the relief work of the West Timor Protestant Church. They continue to provide us with news and updates on the situation.

PGI staff, who are closely monitoring the situation, informed us that considering the intensity of the displacement and ruin in East Timor, it will be a herculean task to rehabilitate the East Timorese and rebuild their country.

Mathews George Chunakara
20 September 1999

Statement of the Executive Board of the Communion of Churches in Indonesia Regarding East Timor after the Ballot

The ballot in East Timor was conducted on 30 August 1999 and the pro-independence side that wished to be released from Indonesia obtained the majority result. With the total votes cast by those in favour of independence of 344,530 (78.5 per cent) compared to 94,388 (21.5 per cent), this majority is very significant and has firmly expressed the view of the majority of East Timorese. Although this result is disappointing to Indonesia, we have to respect the choice of the East Timorese.

One thing that worries us greatly is the violence and brutality that followed the ballot. Hundreds, even thousands of people have been killed. Hundreds of houses have been put on fire. The violence carried out by the pro-integration militia has not been followed by serious and significant measures from the Indonesian armed forces and national police, since the brutality is still continuing. As a consequence, many refugees have had to escape from the area in order to save themselves.

Considering the violence, which has led to mass killing and the sacrifice of innocent people, and in response to government policy and the disproportional role of the armed forces, the Communion of Churches in Indonesia calls on as follows:

- First, to President Habibie as the Armed Forces Highest Commander, to cancel martial law in East Timor and to act strictly towards people who ruin, kill and shoot innocent members of the community. The application of a martial law condition in "non-self-governing territories" is not proper, and even indicates the unprofessional performance of Indonesian armed forces and national police in East Timor in putting the situation in order, which was a condition of the New York Tripartite Agreements.
- Second, in consideration of the escalation of violence

that has occurred in East Timor we request the serious attention of Indonesian armed forces and national police to protect civilians from the mass killings. The death of hundreds of people and the loss of hundreds of houses and buildings in East Timor is the full responsibility of Indonesians. Therefore, we kindly request the government of Indonesia together with the Indonesian armed forces and national police to respect the New York agreement and to show and maintain Indonesia's good image to render its responsibility as a facilitator in East Timor

- Third, to request the Indonesian people to respond positively to the result of the ballot in East Timor. The government of Indonesia proposed two options, and the East Timorese responded according to their will, therefore it is required of Indonesians to appreciate, understand and accept the result.
- Fourth, to call on the Indonesian elite not to engineer the condition in East Timor, but to assist them with full sincerity
- Fifth, in case security cannot be put in order in East Timor the government should consider accepting the existence of an international peacekeeping force in East Timor.

This statement is made in relation to the result of the ballot in East Timor and the violence that occurred in East Timor on the announcement of the ballot result. We urge all Indonesians to pray to the only God to shine on all parties' hearts and minds so that hardened hearts will be softened.

Rev. Dr Sularso Soparter, General Chairman
Rev. Dr J.M. Pattiasina, General Secretary
Jakarta, 8 September 1999

Asian Church Leaders' Consultation on the Rights of Internally Displaced People

Internal displacement (the forced relocation of people within the boundary of a state as a result of political, ethnic and communal conflicts or economic, developmental and environmental reasons) has created a wave of uprooted people across the world. Today, the number has reached at least 30 million.

In Asia the number of internally displaced people is increasing, due to:

- ethnic and religious conflicts, political tensions etc.—e.g. Afghanistan (continued fighting between the Taliban and other forces), Sri Lanka, India and Pakistan (historic tensions and the recent war), Bhutan, Nepal, Myanmar (the forced movement of thousands to military-controlled garrisons in an effort to break the supply, recruitment, and information chain of ethnic minority armies. Many have crossed the border into Thailand), Indonesia (Ambon, Molocus, Borneo, Ache etc.), East Timor (600,000 of the 850,000 population displaced), Cambodia (landmines)
- natural calamities—e.g. Cambodia, China, the Philippines, India, Vietnam, Bangladesh (50 per cent of Bangladesh is only 4.5 m above sea level. Periodic flooding in the flood plains of the Ganges-Padma, the Brahmaputra-Jammu and the Megha has been a real cause of displacement annually)
- large-scale developments such as dam construction and urban devel-

opment—e.g. India (the Narmada Valley is a typical example of development gone awry).

In this context, CCA organised a consultation on 'Rights of Internally Displaced People: Churches' Response' in Colombo, Sri Lanka, 11–17 September. Thirty-seven church leaders from sixteen Asian countries attended. The participants visited three different areas of North and East Sri Lanka where internally displaced people have been sheltered.

The participants identified several issues that confront the churches in Asia. These are:

- vulnerability (of churches and workers) to intimidation and threats of physical harm from opponents, the constant risk of churches/workers being branded 'leftist' (which could antagonise congregations who see no place for 'politics' in church activity) and the

stress for workers working under suspicion from government departments or military

- widespread lack of understanding on IDP issues among churches and the wider community
- the risk of losing community support for church programs if the importance of work with IDPs is not properly understood.

It was proposed that by responding to humanitarian needs of IDPs, churches should raise awareness of root causes of displacement and empower IDPs to have a voice about their rights. Generation of resources for humanitarian relief for IDPs, both emergency and long term, should be considered as a fundamental role of churches to respond to humanitarian issues. Churches should also take keen interest in establishing negotiations with governments on IDP issues.

Mathews George Chunakara



Religious Fundamentalism in India

'Religious Liberty Is a Human Right,' CCA/NCC India Consultation Affirms

The National Council of Churches in India and the Christian Conference of Asia organised a three-day National Consultation 2–4 August 1999 at the Ecumenical Christian Centre, Bangalore, on 'Religious Liberty and Human Rights'. About seventy-five participants, representing churches, theological seminaries, NGOs, people of other faiths, and human rights organisations participated.

The consultation took stock of the emerging religious fundamentalism propagated and implemented by the Hindutva forces, which blatantly undermines and endangers religious liberty and human rights in India. Attacks

on property, murder, arson, looting and rape have been targeted at minority and indigenous people such as Christians, Muslims, Dalits, women, Ambedkarities and Kabir Panthis.

Dr Mathews George Chunakara presented the concept paper in which he outlined the question of religious liberty and human rights from the perspective of international laws and covenants defining and coding human rights, with specific focus on freedom on religion. He analysed the religious liberty situation in Asia.

Justice H. Suresh presented a paper on the theme of religious liberty and human rights in the Indian con-

text. Dr Sathianathan Clarke, a professor at UTC, critically examined the process of the growing fundamentalism within the Indian religious ethos. He identified the undercurrents of this process and even called it the continuation of neoimperialism.

Dr P.J. Alexander presented a paper on religious freedom and constitutional provisions in India. After these presentations the participants went into groups to identify religious fundamentalism in the Indian ethos. They also made several recommendations for the churches to accept for future action.

Mathews George Chunakara



Ecumenical Enablers' Program

An Ecumenical Enablers' Program was organised by the Mission and Evangelism Desk of CCA at the Bangkok YMCA, Thailand, 25–29 August 1999.

Forty-seven participants from fourteen Asian countries, including Australia, took part in this program. Rev. Dr Oscar S. Suarez, pastor of the Cosmopolitan Church, Manila, and Associate Professor of Theology and Ethics at Union Theological Seminary, Dasmariñas, Cavite, Philippines, delivered the keynote presentation on the theme 'Reading the Bible for the Life and Mission of the Church in Asia Today'.

Dr Suarez's presentation dealt with people's quest for a new method in contextual Bible reading. His second lecture was on 'Law and Gospel: Challenging the System'.

Dr Meerha Hahn, Professor of Theology of Hoseo University, Asan, Korea, delivered a special talk on 'Is God-language Clear to You?: A Holistic Way of Reading the Bible'. She emphasised the importance of a holistic way of reading the Bible and how a feminist reading is an effective means to enable people to come to know the truth and the grace of God.

Rev. Mohan Larbeer, a lecturer at Tamil Nadu Theological Seminary, Arasaradi, Madurai, India, spoke on 'The Reading of the Bible with "The Poor" as a Point of Departure'. He focused on the image of the new community of the reign of God.

Rev. Dr Daniel S. Thiagarajah, Executive Secretary for Mission and

Evangelism of CCA, gave an introduction to the program, titled 'Theological and Missiological Perspective that Make Reading the Bible with New Eyes an Imperative'. Through two models of Bible studies and reflections, he explained the rationale of the program.

Pastor Corazon Tabing-Reyes, Executive Secretary for Women's Concerns and Education of CCA, was in charge of the worship services throughout the program. She also led a Bible study giving emphasis to the feminist reading of the Bible.

Dr Sint Kimhachandra, General Secretary of Church of Christ in Thailand (CCT), joined the participants at a special lunch on the second day and

shared his greetings with them. Dr Kyaw Than, a founder member of the East Asia Christian Conference (EACC) and a former General Secretary of CCA, also participated and shared his greetings.

A special session on mission and dialogue was also held during the program. Dr Thiagarajah explained the new focus of the desk for the new millennium. He also gave a synopsis of Dr Wesley Ariarajah's most recently published book *Not without My Neighbour: Issues in Interfaith Relations*.

This program is expected to take a new shape in the new millennium with a new name: 'The Quest for New Hermeneutics in Asia'.

Daniel S. Thiagarajah



(Above) Prof. Meerha Hahn of the Faculty of Theology, Hoseo University, Korea, making a presentation at the Reading the Bible with New Eyes Program. (Below) Program participants



Into the New Millennium with Christ

Consultations on Mission and Unity

Two Consultations on Mission and Unity were held recently in India. The first one was held in Secunderabad in Andhra Pradesh at the diocesan headquarters of Medak Diocese.

About sixty participated in this consultation, held 26–30 July 1999. Laity and clergy, men and women, young and old were given equal participation. The consultation was organised with the help of the Department of Mission and Evangelism of the Church of South India.

The inaugural address was delivered by the Rt Rev. Dr David Pothirajulu, Bishop Emeritus of Madurai–Ramnad Diocese of the CSI. Bishop B.P. Suganthar, Bishop of Medak, presided over the session and welcomed all participants on behalf of

the local hosting committee. Rev. Dr Daniel S. Thiagarajah, Executive Secretary of the Mission and Evangelism Desk of CCA, delivered the keynote address on the theme 'Into the New Millennium with Christ'. This was followed by a group activity on important issues that arose from the talk.

Dr Thiagarajah also gave two special lectures, 'Poor as the Agents of God's Hope in Today's World' and 'The Quest for Peoples' Identity Being the Compelling Force in Doing Mission'. All participants discussed these issues at length in groups.

Bishop Pothirajulu's second talk was based on laity formation. Rev. Dr Milton Jeganathan, Director of the Department of Mission and Evangelism of the CSI Synod, was instrumental in the organisation of this consultation.

Bishop Fredrick William, Bishop of Karimnagar and the Chairperson of the Department of M&E was present throughout the consultation.

The other consultation on the same theme was held at the Carmelite Centre, Trichy. It was attended by over 100 pastors of the Trichy–Tanjore Diocese. Besides Dr Thiagarajah's three talks, Bishop David Pothirajulu and Mrs Kasthuri Pothirajulu delivered two talks. Rev. Dr P. Suriya Pragash, Professor of Homiletics and New Testament of the United Theological College, Bangalore, led a session on 'The Major Thrusts of the Ecumenical Movement towards the New Millennium'. Bishop James Srinivasan, Bishop of Trichy–Tanjore was in charge of the local arrangements.

Daniel S. Thiagarajah

Impact Evaluation

Rural Youth Program Working Group Meeting

The Rural Youth Program Working Group Meeting on Impact Evaluation was held 28 July – 1 August 1999 at the Alumni Centre, University of Philippines. The participants were Lung Ngan Ling, Executive Secretary, CCA Youth, Emma Leslie (Australia), CCA Youth Moderator, and Soth Plai Ngarm (Cambodia) and Pravat Rana (India), who are both youth leaders in local projects of RYP. The aim of the meeting was to develop

the evaluation tools to be used in the RYP impact evaluation that will be launched in 2001. The local hosts were Emmanuel Noel Ilagan (who was also our resource person) and his wife Connie. Another resource person was Edith Maslang of the University of the Philippines. The group members then worked to develop a set of evaluative indicators for the existing phase of Rural Youth Program (1998–2001). On the following day, the indicators

were put on trial with two local projects a pig-raising project in Kalimpong, India, and enhancement of socioeconomic self-reliance for rural young women in Bangladesh. The resource persons critiqued the group presentations and expressed their appreciation for the group members' hard work and success in developing a set of well thought out evaluative indicators for the Rural Youth Program.

Pravat Rana and Lung Ngan Ling

Human Rights Training Workshop

The human cost of the ongoing conflict in Sri Lanka

The ongoing conflict in Sri Lanka has had a dramatic impact on the lives of its people. There has been no easing of the intensity of the civil war and no diminution of its impact on human rights.

Many people remain displaced as a result of the conflict. The human cost is alarming. Innumerable army checkpoints in 'cleared areas' of the north and eastern parts of the country continue to cause immense hardship to civilians.

Both sides of the conflict, the rebel and government forces, are reported to have deliberately and illegally killed

civilians. In the case of the LTTE, such killings are usually a form of revenge on alleged 'informants', and in the case of the military they are usually in retaliation for LTTE attacks on military targets. Of particular concern are reports of disappearances and torture. In addition to the fatalities, there is a growing population of the disabled, people who were caught in crossfire or injured by landmines.

In this context the Christian Conference of Asia and the National Christian Council in Sri Lanka organised a Human Rights Training Workshop for pastors and church workers from dif-

ferent parts of the country. The workshop was held in Colombo, 26–28 July. About forty, including some from the Jaffna Peninsula, attended, representing different denominations, including the Roman Catholic Church. Rt Rev. Kenneth Fernando, President of CCA and Bishop of the Anglican Church in Sri Lanka, inaugurated the workshop. Dr Mathews George Chunakara, Rev. Dr K.A. Abraham, Ms Nimalka Fernando, Rev. Duleep Fernando, Prof. Rohan Ediresinghe, Lakshman Gunasekara, Sirly Wijesinghe and Rev. Ebenezer Joseph were leaders.

Mathews George Chunakara



Your Story Is My Story, Your Story Is Our Story

Women-to-Women Visit to Indonesia



An ecumenical women's delegation visited Indonesia from 24 June to 1 July. The team visit was jointly organised by the World Council of Churches and the Christian Conference of Asia and was supported by the Communion of Churches in Indonesia. The purpose of the visit was twofold. The team urged the Indonesian government to identify and bring to justice those responsible for the communal violence involving Christians and Muslims as well as the violence directed at the ethnic Chinese minority. The team also expressed concern for women and children who have suffered under state-sponsored violence. Following are reports of two of the team members.

Women of Indonesia

Women of Jakarta

When we visited Jakarta's destroyed Chinatown and saw the ruins of one burned down church we were first able to sense the impact of the May 1998 riots. The ruins stood as a symbol of the clashes between Christians and Muslims in different parts of the islands, while the destruction in the Chinese Indonesian section of the city was symbolic of the ethnic

clashes that had further compounded the crisis. The collapse of the miracle economies of South-East Asia hit Indonesia hard last year. The student movement demanded an end to the thirty-two-year rule of a president who survived so long thanks to the power of his brutal military regime. Women often bear the brunt of any economic crisis, and the women we met often described what happened when the rupiah fell to an all-time low. We met some members of the PGI (Communion of Churches in Indonesia) Executive Board and later the whole PGI Executive Committee. The PGI has been active since the May incidents. They see the elections as a new start for Indonesia, and would like to ensure that women can participate meaningfully.

After a day in Jakarta meeting with groups and hearing the tragic aftermath for women following the May riots, we divided into two teams. One team went to Ambon and the other to East Timor, meeting in both places with church leaders, church women, NGOs, women's organisations, student groups, Muslim and Catholic women, and orders of Roman Catholic brothers and sisters. We visited refugee camps and met with women survivors of the horrors of conflict.

Glynthea Finger

Reflections

The objectives of our visit were to offer international solidarity to Indonesian women, to listen to them and to share the concerns, which they expressed in their own words. 'Your story is my story, your story is our story' is one phrase that we repeated as we listened to our sisters' stories. Experience has taught us that women living through wars and conflicts are not only the targets of violence, but also that their struggles and their stories of suffering are often ignored. We hope that documenting the experiences of Indonesian women for the outside world to hear will help us to respond as a global community.

As I was listening to their stories, feeling with them and learning from them, the raging question that arose in my mind was: why do men not only rape women, but also inflict deep wounds on the victims, mutilate their sexual organs, dismember or murder them brutally? Why this deep hostility of men against women? I can't really comprehend this, but I have come to learn about the depth of the scars caused by such violence and the courage of these women who live and struggle in an atmosphere of intimidation and fear. Women are silenced through the enforcement of fear that acts as a form of control over them.

A theological message from Luke 1:39-43 inspired our team: 'Soon afterwards Mary got ready and hurried off to a town in the hill country of Judaea. She went into Zechariah's house and greeted Elizabeth ... "You are the most blessed of all women, and blessed is the child you will bear!" "Why should this great thing happen to me, that my Lord's mother comes to visit me?"' When she knew she was with child, Mary ran to the home of her elder sister to reveal what the angel had told her. Mary had the courage to share her startling news with another woman. And Elizabeth had the compassion to listen and to offer words of comfort. As sisters in a common struggle, they embraced one another and affirmed the power of sisterhood. This is a kind of power that all women can share. This is not destructive or oppressive or controlling power. It is not personal power that deprives another person of power. Rather it is power that enables the restoration of relationships and solidarity. It enables women to speak up and say no, and to

look for an alternative and new voice. I have been thinking about patriarchy. I observed how the system of patriarchy operates in Indonesia. In our visits to the camps, men's voices often overpowered those of women, reducing the latter to silence. When we visited the first camp we asked the male coordinator about the women's situation in the camps, and he responded that men and women all had food and places to sleep. He said, 'There is nothing wrong. Women are OK.' But the women from local women's organisations told us totally different stories.

They told us of spousal abuse, child abuse, and particular kinds of sickness and feelings of insecurity experienced by women because of a lack of privacy in the camps. The socialisation of men into the existing patriarchal societies is so complete that questions are seldom raised about the impact of patriarchy on girls and women. Men find nothing wrong with the men/women relationship of domination and subordination.

We noticed another sign of patriarchy when we were leaving the first camp. The women there held back and stood inside the camp while only the men came out to shake hands with us. How ironic this was considering the fact that our visit was especially to women.

The internalisation of social values and practices are institutionalised too. Sacrifice from women is not only called for, but also enforced by religion. Hence the phenomenon of voiceless women. They ask no questions and therefore find no answers. Most of the women who spoke with me never challenged why they had to suffer violence and trauma. Rather, they saw their suffering as part of God's will and the riots as 'testing by God'.

In such an environment it is difficult for women to break through the barriers and tell their own stories of suffering without thinking that by doing so they are speaking against God when they challenge injustice. It is therefore extremely important for these women to reclaim their own understanding of God and their own experience of the violence and of being silenced by the system of patriarchy. An Indonesian woman theologian, Rev. Septemmy Lakawa, said that Indonesian women need a new image of themselves to be able to understand what had happened to them. They need to discover a new voice for themselves.

Joe Law Pui Kwan

NCKK–NCCP Consultation

The fifth bilateral consultation between the National Council of Churches in the Philippines (NCCP) and the National Council of Churches in Korea (NCKK) was held 17–19 May 1999 in Pansol, Laguna, Philippines. The theme of the consultation was 'Nurturing a Growing Partnership in Mission'. The consultation looked at and made recommendations about three areas of concern.

The Asian Economic Crisis

The Asian Economic Crisis is a serious problem for both Korea and the Philippines. Both countries have been affected by globalisation and are now coping with the worsening economic conditions connected to IMF–World Bank loans and their Structural Adjustment Programs, the culture of corruption and poor stewardship of God's resources.

With regards to this situation the consultation recommended that the NCCP and NCKK:

- design and implement programs to raise awareness on the relationship between faith and economy and educate our members on their responsibility and build a just and fair economic community
- enable and participate in discussions between churches of different countries with the intention of developing solidarity links and mutual cooperation to overcome the economic crisis and economic dependency and in the international and global financial system and negative effects of globalisation
- share strategies on how to contend

with problems of IMF–World Bank Structural Adjustment Programs

- join the growing number of Christians all over the world in calling for Jubilee 2000, the total cancellation of the international debts of the poorest of the poor countries and the reduction of debts of the impoverished countries. We realise that debt servicing and repayment of these debts eat up a substantial amount of the national budget at the expense of basic services to the citizens of these countries
- mobilise more resources and personnel of churches to carry out diaconal mission to help and support the poor and unemployed people, especially the victims of the economic crisis.

Korean Missions/Missionaries in the Philippines

Since the mission of Jesus is realised in diverse dimensions of propagating teaching, healing and liberating, we affirm a shift from a church mission paradigm of 'church for others' to an emphasis on solidarity and partnership as expressed in the call of 'church with others'. In order to encourage, support and foster this paradigm shift the consultation:

- calls for the creation of a coordinating body composed of an equal number of persons from NCKK and NCCP to discuss and formulate an official Partnership in Mission statement that will include, but not be limited to the following:
 - expectations for respect of doctrinal beliefs and polity of the host

church in so far as they are in accordance with Christian precepts
 –opportunities for orientation to culture and church as well as common reflection among Koreans and Filipinos with experience, insight and/or interest in such shared reflection

–promotion of the exchange of human and material resources between churches both in the Philippines and Korea.

- encourages Korean missionaries who do not belong to member churches of NCCP and NCKK to be referred to the coordinating body so that they may be offered both orientation on Filipino culture and church as well as common reflections
- calls for the development of a program for regular exchanges of both human and other resources such as seminary students, church workers and lay people in a continuing effort to strengthen mutual understanding and cooperation between the churches of the Philippines and Korea.

Overseas Filipino Workers in Korea

In light of worsening economic and political conditions in the Asia Pacific region, the phenomenon of massive migration of Filipinos to different parts of the world is one of its most evident results. It has created so much pain and misery that we find it imperative for us, believers in justice, love and equality, to take an active role in advocating their plight and upholding their rights.

It is in this light that the consultation reiterates and recommends that NCCP and NCKK:

- urge the governments of the Republic of Korea and the Philippines to come into a bilateral agreement that would clearly spell out policies governing the Filipino migrant workers in accordance with United Nations conventions on the protection of the migrant workers and their families. We wish that in formulating such an agreement the migrant workers and various parties already rendering various services to them, including churches, be consulted
- establish pastoral and social mission programs to migrant workers, to promote their empowerment by

providing education and training on values formation, general orientation about their rights and other educational needs relevant to their situation

- negotiate with the Korean government to put up a service centre both in Korea and the Philippines for Filipino migrant workers using Korean Overseas Development Aid Funds.
- establish mechanisms or procedures in both councils to monitor the influx of migrant workers in Korea and returning migrants.

Conclusion

Indeed, we are now advancing to a deeper level of understanding and co-operation. We have taken care in in-

stituting avenues, like this Consultation, for sharing and discussing issues concerning the Korean and Filipino people. Along the path we have managed to achieve favourable results as well as frustrating situations and unresolved issues that are oftentimes discouraging.

However, we recognise our shared responsibility in nurturing a meaningful and fruitful partnership. With this in mind, we press on in our journey towards righteousness and mutual understanding.

Rev. Kim Dong Wan, General Secretary, National Council of Churches in Korea

Rt Rev. Roman B. Tipples, Jr, General Secretary, National Council of Churches in the Philippines

Resolutions of the Lutheran World Federation on Asia

India

The Lutheran World Federation notes with shock and sadness the recent attacks on Christian communities in India, which are contrary to the culture of tolerance which has prevailed in Indian society for many centuries. It deplores the fact that the blood of many innocent people has been shed during these acts of violence.

The council voted:

- to express its hope and prayer that the religious tensions in India will lessen and the wanton acts of violence will cease, and that the rights of Dalits and ethnic minorities will be protected
- to declare its solidarity with the victims of the violence, and with the churches as they continue their dialogue with other religious communities and with the government with the aim of improving the inter-religious climate in India
- to encourage the LWF and its member churches to seek advice from the Indian churches on the developing situation and to respond with tangible expressions of solidarity to any requests for support from the churches as they seek to promote religious tolerance and harmony in India.

Indonesia

The Lutheran World Federation notes with thanksgiving the significance and positive changes which are occurring in Indonesian society, including advances in freedom of speech, of the press, and fairer electoral processes. It is concerned, however, about the reports of violence, including loss of life and destruction of churches and schools, associated with ethnic and religious tensions in Indonesia.

The council voted:

- to express its solidarity with the churches and the people of Indonesia in the midst of the changing political, economic and social context and in facing the outbreaks of violence
- to encourage LWF member churches to support in prayer and in material ways the activities of the Indonesian churches to reduce religious and ethnic tensions and to promote reconciliation within Indonesian society
- to urge the Indonesian government to take preemptive steps to prevent further violence and bring to justice those responsible for these criminal acts.

East Timor

The Lutheran World Federation welcomes the recent developments in the internationally-agreed process leading up to a popular ballot regarding self-determination for the people of East Timor.

The council voted:

- to express its support to the religious leaders in East Timor who have been working for an impartial and free expression of the will of the people
- to express its hope that the Indonesian government will take steps to ensure a peaceful balloting process, and that all parties will respect the outcome of the ballot
- To encourage the LWF and its member churches to engage in ecumenical initiatives for the promotion of a democratic and just resolution of the status of East Timor.

*Bratislava, Slovak Republic
28 June 1999*

Mor Gregorioso

High Grace Geevarghese Mor Gregorioso died 22 February 1999. Mor Gregorioso was the President of the Malankara Jacobite Syrian Orthodox Church in India. He was born in a very humble and financially poor family and during his life he always exhibited great sensitivity to the needs of the suffering and the poor. Mor Gregorioso was gifted with powerful oratorical and musical skills. Whenever Mor Gregorioso conducted the Holy Eucharist liturgy, the Orthodox liturgy reached sweeter and greater realms. He was a scholar in Malayalam language and literature and had authored about ten books, almost all of them consisting of liturgical songs and prayers.

Franklyn J. Balasundaram

Rev. Dr Franklyn J. Balasundaram died on 3 July 1999 after suffering a massive heart attack at the conclusion of a major Gender Equality Workshop held at the United Theological College in Bangalore, India. Dr Balasundaram was on the faculty of UTC for over ten years. Besides serving as professor he was formerly Head of the Department of the History of Christianity and Director of Research and Postgraduate Studies.

He was a prolific writer, serving as author and editor of many books and Editor of the Bangalore Theological Forum. He was also the General Secretary of the Church History Association of India. Dr Balasundaram was a

prophetic leader, a comrade in the struggle for justice and human dignity and a fierce campaigner for the rights of Dalits, women, indigenous peoples and other minority peoples. He leaves behind his wife Elizabeth and his sons Clement and Gautam. He died as he lived: struggling for the rights of the oppressed.

Morris Andrews

Rt Rev. Morris Andrews, Bishop of the Agra Diocese of the Church of North India, died at age 55 in an automobile accident on 9 July 1999. He is survived by his wife Harshlata and a married daughter, Maneesha. Bishop Andrews was consecrated Bishop of the Church of North India in 1992 after serving the Diocese as a presbyter for nearly two decades. He was President of the Synodical Board of Social Services (SBSS) and was also a member of the CNI Synod's Executive Committee. During his years of service he made a significant contribution to the life and witness of the church.

Samuel Ahlad

Bishop Samuel Ahlad of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Madhya Pradesh (ELC-MP) died on 9 June 1999 at the age of 60. He is survived by his wife, Mrs Heeramani Ahlad, two sons and a daughter. Bishop Ahlad was consecrated as the fourth bishop of the church in December 1984. He was the third Indian bishop of ELC-MP. Bishop Ahlad received his Bachelor of Theology degree from the Union Biblical

Seminary, Yaratmal, Maharashtra. He was interested in international affairs, widely travelled and had attended two assemblies of the Lutheran World Federation and numerous conferences representing his church. He was also one of the Vice-Presidents of the United Evangelical Lutheran Church in India (UELCI) and a member of the Executive Committee of UELCI. Bishop Ahlad was fondly known as 'the people's bishop'. He will be remembered for his humour, his conscious adoption of a simple life style, his honesty in financial and administrative work and his deep commitment to the church.

James Lau

Colonel James Lau Man-kin, Officer Commanding of the Salvation Army in Hong Kong, died on 30 June 1999 at the age of 63. He was the first person from Hong Kong to hold such a high position in the Salvation Army. James Lau was sworn in as a soldier of the Salvation Army in 1955 and became an officer in 1969. He had served the Salvation Army as Officer Commanding of Singapore and Malaysia Command before returning to Hong Kong in 1993 to assume the position of Officer Commanding of Hong Kong and Taiwan Command. In 1997 he was promoted to the rank of Colonel. Colonel Lau was known as a kind and open-minded person who was well loved by all the church members and employees of the Salvation Army Hong Kong Command. He is survived by his wife, Colonel Alice Lau, and his two sons, Michael and Kenneth.

Anandarao Samuel

The Rt Rev. Anandarao Samuel, former Moderator of the Church of South India (CSI), was called to rest on 30 May 1999.

Bishop Samuel was so deeply committed to the ordination of women that he commissioned the subject for study and debate. It was finally passed in 1980. His greatest achievements were in the role he played for the formation of the Joint Council of Churches of North India (CNI), Church of South India (CSI) and Mar Thoma churches and in the opening of discussions with the Lutheran and Baptist churches in a move towards a wider unity. Bishop Samuel lectured in several theological faculties in Germany, the United Kingdom and in the USA. He also served as the Senior Chaplain of the Christian Medical College and Hospital in Vellore and as a staff member in the Department of Pastoral Ministry at the United Theological College, Bangalore. Bishop Samuel's deep commitment to the poor and minorities also made him a victim of the violence that brought a tragic end to the life of his wife Florence in 1978. He made a great impact on the ecumenical church until he breathed his last.

Larry Tankersley

The Rev. Larry Dean Tankersley, Director of the Southern Asia Office for the National Council of Churches/Church World Service and Witness, died 15 September 1999 after a four-month struggle with cancer. He was 64.

Rev. Tankersley was an ordained minister in the Christian Church (Dis-

ciples of Christ) and an expert on Southern Asia, especially Indonesia. His colleagues point to the poignancy of him dying at the same time as thousands of people, including church leaders, were being killed or forced to flee in East Timor. Rev. Tankersley had long pressed the case of the East Timorese people and was responsible for taking many delegations of church leaders to East Timor to educate them about the situation, most recently in 1998.

'I think of him as I watch stories about East Timor and Indonesia and how committed he was to the people,' said the Rev. Dr Joan B. Campbell, NCC General Secretary.

'Right up to the end of his life, he was calling me about East Timor and Indonesia. His concern was rooted outside himself and in the people he loved and cared about and in the mission he was called to serve.'

Rev. Tankersley earned his Bachelor of Divinity from Brite Divinity School of Texas Christian University in Fort Worth in 1962. He completed additional studies at San Francisco Theological Seminary, in Southeast Asia Studies at Cornell University, and of the Indonesian language at Sataya Wacana University in Salatiga, Indonesia.

Rev. Tankersley was ordained a minister of the Christian Church in 1957. He served several pastorates in the United States and then, with his wife Betty, served as a missionary in North Sumatra from 1967 to 1970. He also taught Religion and English at the Christian University of Indonesia in Jakarta through the Indonesian Council of Churches and the Division of Overseas Ministries of the Christian

Church until 1972. In 1972 Rev. Tankersley was appointed administrator of the Week of Compassion, the relief and development fund of the Christian Church. In 1991 he returned to Indonesia with his wife Betty to be a development consultant to the Communion of Churches in Indonesia and Country Representative for the Church World Service. He became NCC/CWSW Southern Asia Director in 1994.

As NCC/CWS Southern Asia Director, Rev. Tankersley administered a program that encompassed emergency relief, human development and refugee assistance work in Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka, Burma, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, Bangladesh, Nepal and Indonesia.

Rev. Tankersley was responsible for initiating a comprehensive food-for-work program in Indonesia to alleviate the suffering caused by drought, forest fires and economic and political turmoil.

The US\$2.5m program has already provided 37,000 families with food, seeds and tools. In exchange, recipients repair irrigation canals, roads and bridges and build water conservation systems, all contributing to long-term food security.

He is survived by Betty Turpin Tankersley, his wife of forty-five years, who is currently Program Associate in the Southern Asia Office of the United Church of Christ/Christian Church and by three children and four grandchildren.

Dr Campbell said about him, 'He grew up understanding unity and carried that out in the international realm. He lived life to its fullest. He was a good, strong colleague and we'll miss him.'



Jubilee Must Go On

From 18 to 20 June the heads of state of the seven richest industrialised countries met in Cologne, Germany. The 1999 summit takes place at a time when the policies of the World Bank, the IMF and the WTO are playing a dominant role in the life of the people of Asia. The economic depression in southeast and north Asia, the marginalisation of poor countries and the burden of debt are adding to the problems in the poorer countries. NGOs and Christian organisations held several parallel meetings at the same time as the G7 summit. These included an alternative economic summit, which was organised by a North-South working group of Oxfam Germany, Jubilee Beyond 2000, Jubilee 2000 Germany and Jubilee South. More than 5,000 people came to Cologne to attend seminars and to demonstrate against debt. Jubilee South, which has strong positions and radical demands on the issue of debt,

was not satisfied with the result of the G7 summit. 'We want no more than a single penny to be paid for debt,' said Lidy B. Nacpil, the General Secretary for Freedom from Debt Coalition. The General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, Dr Konrad Raiser, stated that rich countries should do more about debt cancellation.

In my opinion, the decision of G7 in Cologne will not much help in reducing the suffering and debt burden of Asian people. What G7 has done is like handing out peanuts to prevent poverty. Globalisation will continue to bring exploitation. 'Debt cancellation is important but not enough. We need a new international financial order in the new millennium,' said Professor Chan Keun Lee of Taegu Round (a conference on 'Alternatives to the International Financial Order' to be held in Taegu, Korea, 6-8 October 1999). From the perspective of Asia, churches and especially URM and other Christian NGOs, need to continue the jubilee and debt-free campaign. This is a

means for having a long-term goal to fight for justice in the global community.

Josef Widyatmadja

New Appointments NCC Sri Lanka

Rev. W.P. Joseph was appointed as the General Secretary of the National Christian Council of Sri Lanka in January 1999. Rev. Joseph is a Methodist minister and an experienced theologian and a social worker. He hopes to sharpen the focus of NCC-related activities. He is committed to working for peace and reconciliation in Sri Lanka and wants to foster closer relationships with people of other faiths. Asoka Weerasinghe was appointed Associate General Secretary of NCC Sri Lanka in May 1999. He had served the YMCA for six years before joining the NCC. He has wide experience in development work and is particularly interested in working with the poor. He has also been involved in peace, reconciliation and reconstruction work.

Dr V.S. Lall Elected as Council for World Mission Deputy Moderator

The Council for World Mission, at its 1999 biennial council meeting held in Apia (Samoa), elected Dr V.S. Lall, General Secretary of the Church of North India Synod, as its Deputy Moderator for 1999-2001.

The Council for World Mission (CWM) is a community of thirty-two churches worldwide, committed to carrying out God's mission locally and sharing their resources of money, people, skills and insights globally.

Dr Lall joined the Church of North India as General Secretary in May 1993. Prior to his coming to CNI he was the General Secretary of New Delhi YMCA from 1986 till 1993. During the past few years, Dr Lall has also richly

contributed to the life of CWM in various capacities. Dr Lall believes that we as God's chosen people are called on to actively engage in God's mission and bring good news to everyone, irrespective of caste, colour or creed.

CHURCH FEATURE

Gereja Masehi Injili di Minahasa (GMIM)

Ecumenical Relations

Gereja Masehi Injili di Minahasa (Christian Evangelical Church in Minahasa) is one of the founding members of the World Council of Churches, the Communion of Churches in Indonesia and the Christian Conference of Asia. It is also a member of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches. GMIM has maintained good relations with the neighbouring Catholic Church and the other Protestant denominations in Indonesia. In its history GMIM has also entertained partnerships abroad with many churches and ecumenical institutions.

History

GMIM is a native church, which grew out of the former Protestant Church in Indonesia in 1934. Christianity in Minahasa started in the early part of the nineteenth century when German Dutch-trained missionaries like J.P. Riedel and J.C. Schwarz arrived to proclaim the gospel and baptise the converted native people. These missionaries established local congregations. Ministered by 900 pastors, of which 65 per cent are women, GMIM now has 735 local congregations grouped into 85 presbyteries, with a total membership of over 700,000 people. GMIM has 305 Christian educators. It also runs numerous educational institutions: kindergartens (332), elementary schools (364), junior high schools (64), senior high schools (20), vocational schools, including boarding schools, managerial schools and technical schools (6), a university and theological school, schools for the disabled (2), orphanages (2) and vocational and training centres (2).

Location

GMIM congregations are spread out on the northern part of the island of Sulawesi, formerly known as Celebes. The landscape is a contrast of tropical rainforest, rambling hills, mountain ranges and volcanic craters and unspoiled islands with breath-taking coral reefs and some 300,000 varieties of fish. GMIM headquarters is located in Tomohon, a country town with chilly weather at night and a population of approximately 80,000.

GMIM will be hosting the CCA Assembly in June 2000 in Tomohon.

GMIM Programs

General Programs

- Faith and Order
- Parish Ministries
- Professional-Functional Ministries
- Mission-Ecumenism
- Diaconal Ministries
- Personnel Ministries

Mission and Ecumenism Programs

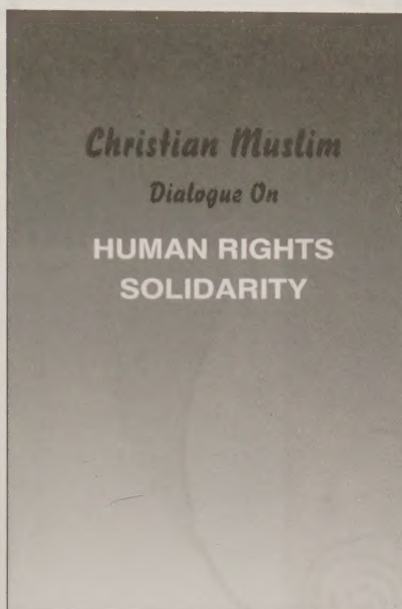
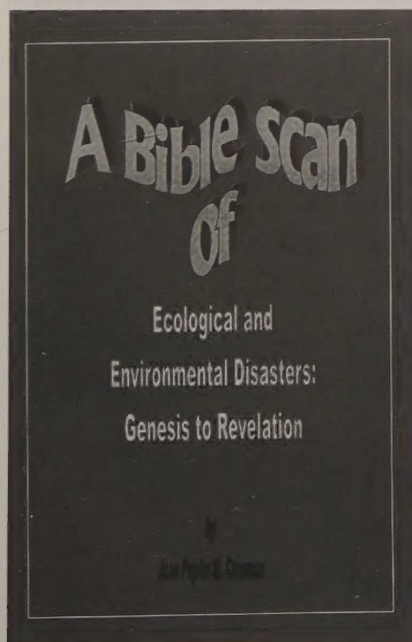
- Ministry and Evangelism
- Urban Rural Ministries
- Ecumenical Relations
- Dialogue with Other Religions and Faiths
- Church and Society

New Publications from CCA

A Bible Scan of Ecological and Environmental Disasters: Genesis to Revelation

Jose Pepito M. Cunanan
US\$5

How do we respond to natural and human-made disasters? This book gives a complete list of ecological and environmental disasters in the Old and New Testaments, and shows people's reactions and responses to them. It details incidents of warning and judgment coupled with accounts of restoration and renewal. The book relates Biblical disasters to modern ones (particularly in the Philippines context) and provides material for further study of the impact of disasters 'on persons, communities, peoples and nations as well as for the whole earth'.

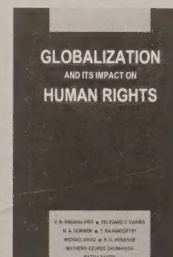
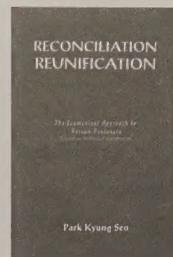


Christian Muslim Dialogue on Human Rights Solidarity

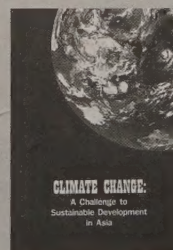
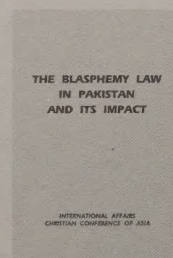
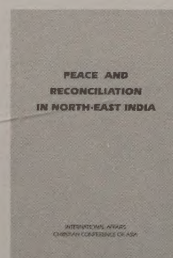
Edited by Mathews George Chunakara
US\$5

Religious revivalism has often been accompanied by religious intolerance. The trend towards using religion in state structures has caused violations of fundamental rights. There is considerable need to develop meaningful dialogue between different communities to support communal harmony. This small book contains papers from the Consultation on Christian-Muslim Dialogue on Human Rights Solidarity held in Bangkok, Thailand, 6-8 September 1998. It is hoped that these materials will help to promote a climate that welcomes human rights solidarity between Christians and Muslims.

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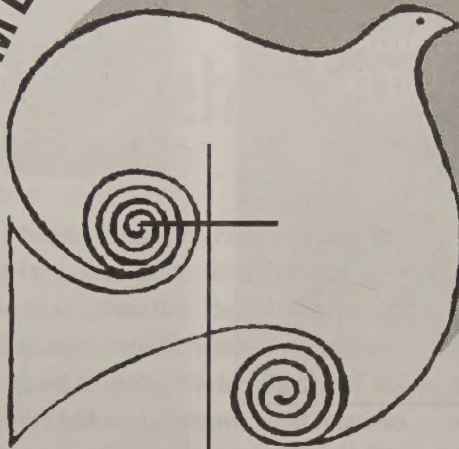
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TIME FOR FULLNESS OF LIFE FOR ALL



John 10:10

The Eleventh General Assembly
Christian Conference of Asia
Tomohon - Minahasa
North Sulawesi - INDONESIA
June 1 - 6, 2000

The Logo for the Eleventh General Assembly

- The theme, 'Time for Fullness of Life for All', is in the form of a rainbow, which symbolises God's covenant with Noah. In our present day it also symbolises the promise that God gives to humanity.
- The dove symbolises the Holy Spirit, which is soaring through time (*kairos*) instead of descending slowly on the disciples. The dove looks to the new millennium with optimistic hope.
- The cross descending represents *oikumene*, an ecumenical symbol. The lack of the traditional boat indicates more inclusiveness.
- The ornamental design attached to the wings of the dove is a characteristic Indonesian traditional motif.

Eko Agus Prawoto, Indonesia
(the artist who designed the CCA Assembly logo)